

indicated by the appended claims rather than by the foregoing description. All changes that come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are to be embraced within their scope.

What is claimed is:

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1. In a system that includes a computer device and a printing device, a method
for providing print job accounting, the method comprising the steps for:

initiating a print job; and

5 determining a cost for the print job prior to despooling print data to the
printing device, wherein the print data relates to the print job.

2. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps for:

determining whether there exist sufficient funds in an account of a user to
charge the cost to the account; and

10 if there exists sufficient funds in the account, charging the cost to the account.

3. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the step for determining whether
there exist sufficient funds further comprises the step for authenticating information relating
to the account.

15 4. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the step for authenticating
information comprises the step for receiving information from a user.

20 5. A method as recited in claim 4, wherein the information received includes a
password.

6. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the step for authenticating information comprises the steps for:

using a print processor to authenticate user information and account information; and

5 passing the user information and account information to a spooler.

7. A method as recited in claim 6, wherein the step for passing comprises at least one of:

- (i) embedding the user and account information in spool data;
- 10 (ii) using an application program interface call to pass the user and account information;
- (iii) using a spool directory to pass the user and account information; or
- (iv) using a registry to pass the user and account information.

15 8. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein if the information is not authenticated, performing the step for denying a spooling of the print data to the printing device.

9. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the step for determining a cost for the
20 print job further comprises the step for parsing data.

10. A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the step for parsing data includes the steps for:

determining sheet assembly requirement for the print job;
determining the sheet assembly characteristics of the print job; and
determining the number of pages for the print job.

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11. A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the step for determining the number of pages includes counting the number of EMF pathnames.

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12. A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the step for determining the number of pages includes identifying the number of page boundaries for the print job.

13. A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the step for determining the number of pages includes counting the number of EMF page file offset links.

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14. A method as recited in claim 10, further comprising the steps for:
writing print instructions to a printer driver;
saving print instructions and device context in EMF; and
initiating spooling of journaled data to the spooler.

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15. A method as recited in claim 14, further comprising the step for despooling spool data from the spooler to a print processor.

16. A method as recited in claim 10, further comprising the steps for:
writing print instructions to a printer driver;
rendering print instruction and device context data into printer ready data; and
initiating spooling of printer ready data to the spooler.

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17. A method as recited in claim 16, further comprising the step for despooing
spool data from the spooler to a print processor.

18. A method as recited in claim 10, further comprising the steps for:

10 writing print instructions to a printer driver;
saving print instructions and device context in EMF;
spooling EMF data to a client spooler;
despooling EMF data to a client print processor; and
initiating queuing of the print job on a print server.

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19. A method as recited in claim 18, further comprising the step for despooing
spool data from a server spooler to a server print processor.

20. A method as recited in claim 10, further comprising the steps for:
writing print instructions to a printer driver;
rendering print instructions and device context data into printer ready data;
spooling printer ready data to a client spooler;
5 despooling printer ready data to a client print processor; and
initiating queuing the print job on a print server.

21. A method as recited in claim 20, further comprising the step for despooling
spool data from a server spooler to a server print processor.

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22. A system for use in providing print job accounting, the system comprising:
a printing device;
a computer device linked to the printing device, wherein the computer device
initiates a print job that is to be printed at the printer device, and wherein a cost for the
print job is calculated prior to despooling print data, corresponding to the print job, to
the printing device.

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23. A system as recited in claim 22, further comprising a network, wherein the
network links the computer device to the printing device.

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24. A system as recited in claim 23, further comprising a second computer device
connected to the network, wherein the second computer device is a server, and wherein the
computer device is a client.

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25. A system as recited in claim 23, wherein the computer device includes a
spooler that is used to parse data in order to calculate the cost for the print job.

26. A system as recited in claim 23, wherein the computer device includes a
printer driver that is used to parse data in order to calculate the cost for the print job.

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27. A system as recited in claim 23, wherein the computer device includes a print processor that is used to provide job accounting information.

28. A system as recited in claim 23, wherein the computer device includes a
5 spooler that is used to provide print job accounting information.

29. A computer program product for implementing within a computer system a method for providing print job accounting, the computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium for providing computer program code means utilized to implement the method, wherein the computer program code means is comprised of executable code for implementing the steps for:

initiating a print job; and

determining a cost for the print job prior to despooling print data to the printing device, wherein the print data relates to the print job.

10 30. A computer program product as recited in claim 29, wherein the computer
program code means is further comprised of executable code for implementing the steps for:

determining whether there exist sufficient funds in an account of a user to charge the cost to the account; and

if there exists sufficient funds in the account, charging the cost to the account.

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31. A computer program product as recited in claim 30, wherein the computer program code means is further comprised of executable code for implementing the step for authenticating information relating to the account.

32. A computer program product as recited in claim 31, wherein if the information is not authenticated the computer program code means is further comprised of executable code for implementing the step for denying a spooling of the print data to the printing device.

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33. A computer program product as recited in claim 32, wherein the computer program code means is further comprised of executable code for implementing the steps for:

determining sheet assembly requirement for the print job;

determining the sheet assembly characteristics of the print job; and

determining the number of pages for the print job.

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